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A Vindication

OF THE

Miniſters of Boſton,

FROM THE

Abuſes & Scandals,

lately caſt upon them,

IN

Diverſe Printed Papers.

By Some of their PEOPLE

Matth. XXV. 40. —— *Ye have done it unto me.*

BOSTON in *New-England*:
Printed by *B. Green*, for *Samuel Gerriſh*, at his Shop near the Brick Meeting-houſe in Corn-Hill. 1722.

A

Vindication

OF THE

Minister of Bolton,

FROM THE

Abuses & Slanders,

Lately cast upon them,

IN

Divers Printed Papers.

A Vindication, &c.

§ 1. THE *Sacred Oracles*, of our Bleſſed SAVIOUR, ev'ry where charge us, to treat the Miniſters of Religion with a becoming Eſteem & Veneration. The APOSTLE, *beſeeches us to know them, that labour among us, and are over us, in the Lord, and admoniſh us, and eſteem them very highly for their Works ſake.* Nor is this inculcated upon us, as a *Duty* only; but recommended to us, as our *Intereſt.* And the reverſe is, a ſure Method to bring the Bleſſed *Truths*, which they deliver, into Contempt and Ridicule; and baniſh all ſerious Religion out of the World. A finiſh'd *Stratagem of the Devil*! To this purpoſe one of our very Reverend DIVINES well expreſſes himſelf! "As a "corrupt, ignorant & vicious Clergy, is one of the "darkeſt & moſt comprehenſive Infelicities, under "which the Rulers of the darkneſs of this World, "hold it putrifying, yea, the grand cauſe of all "the *Corruption*, in which Mankind lye gene-"rally languiſhing and periſhing: And it is not "for nothing, that when the *Kingdom of our* GOD "comes on, this muſt be one Introduction or Con-"comitant of it; *Thus ſays the* Lord God, *behold* "*I am againſt the Shepherds, and I will cauſe them* "*to ceaſe from feeding the Flocks, for I will de-*

" *liver my Flock from their mouth.* So the Re-
" verſe of this, is, a ſet of *Good Men* inſpired
" with an holy *Zeal* to do good, who like *Angels*,
" *flying thro' the midſt of Heaven*, Preach nothing
" but the *Everlaſting Goſpel*, with the true *Spirit*
" of it unto them *who dwell upon the Earth*: Cer-
" tainly ſuch Men are the *Stars* whom GOD
" *calls by their Names*, they *ſhine as Lights* in the
" World, in their benign Influences; the Bleſſings
" of the People that enjoy them are wonderful!
" are wonderful!

§ 2. BOSTON may boaſt of almoſt an unpa-ralel'd Happineſs in their MINISTERS; ſome of us, have travel'd to other, and diverſe parts of the World; and we ſincerely profeſs, we never ſaw the Place that excelled BOSTON in this reſpect. GOD has indulged to this People a very *Candid*, *Learned* and *Religious* ſet of Men, who in all things unbiaſſedly conſult the good of their reſpective Flocks; nor do they intermeddle with *other Men's Affairs* more than what is proper to their Function. 'Tis this endears them unto us, and makes us rejoyce in them; and offer our thanks to GOD for the *Gifts* and *Graces* that ſhine ſo viſibly in [redacted] we thought our *Neighbours* [redacted] all ſenſible of the *invaluable Bleſſings of* GOD to us, in this Regard: But to our Aſtoniſhment, we ſee *ſome* in this Place ſo *daringly Profane*, as to Libel and Lampoon *theſe holy Servants* of our Bleſſed JESUS; and *others* ſo fooliſhly fond of their *Invectives*, as to countenance and promote them; and this, among *ſober* Perſons, and *Members* of our *Churches*.

§ 3. Or

§ 3. OF late, there has been Publiſhed, (it may be ſpoken to our diſhonour) ſeveral *detracting* and *ſcandalous Pamphlets*, tending to render the MINISTRY *Vain* and *Ridiculous*. In theſe, this *Sacred Order of Men* has been *Strangely* repreſented, and *horribly* animaverted upon. Many things have been charged on them, of which they been intirely *Innocent*, and many things that *it is their Glory they have ſpoke them*, have been moſt maliciouſly perverted and equivocated. And now, who ſhould the Authors of theſe be, but STRANGERS or ABJECTS, which inhances their *Folly*, and makes their *Impudence* the more brazen and flagitious. Above all, we wonder at a **Weekly Paper**, which has been, and is now, Publiſhed, either *deſignedly*, to affront our Miniſters, and render them Odious; or elſe, it has hitherto, wretchedly deviated from it's *ultimate Intent*, and been notoriouſly proſtituted to that *Helliſh Servitude*. We know no *Nation* under the Sun, that has ſo openly and aſſiduouſly inſulted the MINISTERS of their GOD; and been ſo ſtrenuous, in their Endeavours, to make them deſpicable and deteſtable to their *People*, as the *Authors* of this ſcandalous **Libel**.

§ 4. THAT the World may ſee this Repreſentation is juſt, we will recite a few Paſſages (as a Specimen) from their Writings, paſſing over the many indirect and ſcandalous Glances at them. In the Writings of *John Williams* (Tobacconiſt)

'The Miniſters have generally revolted from the 'good old way, and have ſet up a way that their 'Fathers knew not of, neither entered it into their 'hearts, to allude unto *Jer.*5.23. They are *revolted*

'*and*

'*and gone.* Again, *Defective in morals,* — The '*cauſes of Diviſions.* —— People are afraid the 'Miniſters do affect to Rule over them, in *Tempo-*'*rals,* as the Pope of *Rome* does *Temporally* as well 'as *Spiritually* rule and determine things ——.

In the Learned *Taliacotius,* 'The Infatuations in 'this Country ſeem always to have proceeded from 'ſome of thoſe who call themſelves the Sons of '*Levi.* They are repreſented as Men of WICKED 'DESIRES —— and *impious, ignorant & braſen-*'*faced. Prob Fides! Oh Impiety! Oh Braſs! In* '*the Reflections on the Town Meeting, Aug.* 11. 1721. 'It is *thought by three parts of this Town* that its 'better they were a-foot with a good pair of Shoes 'on their Feet, and a Staff in their hands. —— In-'cendiaries of Strife & Diviſion. In the *Courant,* 'No. 23. **Moſt of the Miniſters are for it '& that induces me to think, it is from 'the Devil.** No. 25. *The Inſtruments of miſ-'chief & trouble both in Church & State, from the* '*Witchcraft to Inoculation* ——. *Formerly there* '*were many grave & wiſe Miniſters, but now there* '*are few.* *** But 'tis needleſs and endleſs to quote, the Paſſages are ſo notorious and numerous.

§ 5. THESE *Reflections* upon and *Abuſes* of this *Sacred Order of Men,* are ſufficient, to make the moſt profeſſed *Libertine* bluſh. Who is there that can ſee all this, the MINISTERS, by whom they expect to be brought home to CHRIST, thus audaciouſly inſulted, thus vilely trampled upon, and impiouſly buffoon'd, by the profane Sons of **Cozah,** and tamely & ſilently bear it. 'Tis this amazes, & alarms us, and we think it a *Duty* indiſpenſibly incumbent

incumbent upon us, more thoroughly to *enquire into the Characters of our* MINISTERS, whether they are worthy of these *Barbarous Reflections*, yea or no? We cannot answer the neglect of this; if we should, our *Consciences* would one Day, as a *Flaming Witness* flush our *Guilt* in our Faces. We are their *People*, and hope by their precious *Ministry* to be brought home to GOD, & Everlasting Life; and therefore we are bound to appear in their *Just Vindication*; and rescue our Children, and our Neighbours from the deadly *Poison*, which these *Children* of the Old *Serpent* would infuse into them. And here first, We cannot but admire the Moderation, and consummate Patience of our PASTORS, amidst these outragious and provoking Abuses & Scandals. They shine with an *Unshaken Constancy*, and still go on to *Minister* in those very parts of their *Office*, that ten Thousand difficulties have conspired to obstruct them in. Their Discharge of their *Publick Ministry* is too well known, to need a Report of ours, and their *Prayers* & *Sermons* proclaim them, to be *Workmen* that need not be ashamed. Their *Printed Labours* are inconteſtable Testimonies of their *Abilities*; and speak an *excellent Spirit* breathing in them. Their nine *Lectures* upon *Early Piety*, Preached in so remarkable a Time, that it plainly shew'd, GOD was with them: These (if nothing else) recommend them to the *Love* & *Esteem* of all *good People*; and we do not wonder to see the *Devil* so earnest in his *revenges* upon them. Their *Pastoral Visits* are wisely, painfully & faithfully manag'd; and if we enquire into their more *private Conversation*, we find them *shining Instances*, of the most *refined*

Virtue

Virtue & Religion. They are always ready *to do Good*, and *Rejoice* in all *Opportunities* for it. Never are they addreſſed by any in Affliction, but they adminiſter Comfort, and the *Afflicted* find the *Bowels* of a *Father* in them; and their *Liberalities* are alſo truly extraordinary. We never enjoy their *Company*, but their Savoury & Entertaining *Diſcourſe* evidently diſcovers an Internal *Source* of *Goodneſs* in them; and the *Blame* centers upon ourſelves, if we grow not *better & wiſer* by it. Some of them have **great Names** in diſtant Lands; and *foreign Countries* have a great *Veneration* for them. But to conclude their *Praiſes*, they are *more precious than the fine gold*; *than the golden wedge of Ophir.*

§ 6. BUT now, what is there can juſtify the *virulent* and *unwearied* Endeavours of theſe *Wicked Men* to make them Odious? The only *pretext* they have is, That the MINISTERS have intermedled with *Civil* Affairs, and *gone out of their Line*; and the only Inſtance they can give of this, (for the others are only groundleſs Surmiſes, or open Calumnies) is this, When the *Small-Pox* was firſt breaking into the Town, and every one foreſaw and feared a dreadful Mortality; theſe *good Men* were appriſed of a ſafe Method, which they by the ordinary Bleſſing of GOD, hoped might be an Inſtrument of ſaving many *Lives*. This *Method* came to them with very authentic Recommendations; nor was ever, any *Remedy* attended with a more uninterrupted, & remarkable *Succeſs* than this. This they communicated to the PHYSICIANS; urging them, (not to put it into practice, as the *News-Letter* declares, but) to *meet together*,

and

and *conſult* how far, or whether at all, it might be practis'd; and deſiring they would *proceed* with *mutual Aſſiſtances*, each to t'other, as GOD ſhould direct them. And to do ſome juſtice by the way to that *eminent Perſon*, the *Learned* Dr. COTTON MATHER, *Fellow of the Royal Society* (who to his *honour*) was the principal *Inſtrument*, in promoving this *Method* among us: (and who now diſdains to draw his **generous Pen** for his own *Vindication*, againſt the many fooliſh **pamphlets** that are pointed at him; and who changes not his *Temper* for all their inviduous Calumnies;) we will here tranſcribe the *Words* with which he concludes his *Addreſs* to the **Phyſicians**; Dated, *June* 6. 1721. "I will only ſay, (writes the "DOCTOR) that inaſmuch as the Practice of ſuf-"fering and preventing the *Small-Pox*, in the way "of **Inoculation** has never yet, (as far as I have "heard) been introduced into our *Nation*; where "there are ſo many that would give *great Sums*, to "have their Lives inſur'd, from the *dangers* of this "dreadful *Diſtemper*, nor has ever any one in all "*America* ever yet, made the tryal of it (tho' we "have ſeveral *Africans* among us, as I now find, "who tryed it in their own *Country*) I cannot but "move it be WARILY proceeded in. I durſt not "yet engage, that the *Succeſs* of the tryal here "will be the ſame, as has hitherto been in the "other *Hemiſphere*. But I am very confident, no "perſon would miſcarry in it, but what muſt moſt "certainly have miſcarried upon taking it the "*Common way*. And I would humbly *adviſe*, that "it be never made, but under the management, "of a *Skilful* **Phyſician**, who will wiſely pre-

" pare the Body for it before he performs the O-
" peration. *Gentlemen*, My *requeſt* is, that you
" would *meet for a Conſultation* upon this Occaſion,
" and to *deliberate* upon it, that whoever firſt be-
" gins this practiſe, (*if you approve that it ſhould*
" *be begun at all*) may have the concurrence of his
" *worthy Brethren* to fortify him in it ——.

Thus the Doctor.

WE appeal to the whole World, whether this *Gentleman went out of his line*, or did any thing, but what became a *Miniſter*, a *Chriſtian*, or a *Gentleman*, in his addreſs. And this is all the blame, they do with any *Colour* charge upon him, & which has given *Life* to ſo many monſtrous, and bitter *Invectives* againſt him. But to return from this Excurſion. The **Phyſicians** never met, nor conſulted about this *Method*, according to the *deſires* of the MINISTERS, till one of them began the Experiment upon his *Family*. He had juſt reaſon to apprehend them in danger of being Infected the *Common way*: and here, I cannot omit to obſerve the *happy juncture* of *Affairs* that *united*, to render this his Attempt *Innocent* & *Blameleſs*. The worthy TOWNSMEN had taken the *Guards* off the *Infected houſes*, and in effect proclaim'd the *Infection* ſo prevalent, that 'twould be in vain, to ſtrive to ſuppreſs it. By this *all* the *Nurſes* were commiſſioned, to air themſelves, who had been ſtifled, for a conſiderable Time, by a cloſe Confinement with the *Sick*: *Liberty* was declared to them to walk the Streets; and now as the *neceſſities* of the *Sick* urged, theſe *Infected perſons* might go to our *Doctors* upon any occaſion; and any heedleſs or head-ſtrong *Neighbours* run in to viſit their contagious

tagious *Friends*; which muſt neceſſarily render their *Families* very obnoxtious to the diſtemper. This clearly evinces the *eminency* of the *danger* his Family was in; and in a great meaſure vindicates his procedure. But notwithſtanding, a *mighty Storm* was raiſed, & a ſaucy *Libel* publiſhed, which among other things demanded an anſwer to a *Caſe of Conſcience*. Six MINISTERS of BOSTON undertook to give a proper anſwer to the Demand, wherein they did ſome juſtice to the *Gentleman* that *that Paper* had *unjuſtly* reproached. After this, the MINISTERS were ſilent for ſeveral Months, till at length the conſtant *Succeſs* of the Experiment encouraged *Some* of them to publiſh their *Sentiments* on this ſubject, eſpecially what related *to the caſe of* **Conſcience.** And here, we think it very ſtrange & rediculous, to ſee the *Satyriſts* play the Divine, and deny that it falls under the Cognizance of our MINISTERS, when ſo many People pretend CONSCIENCE in the matter. This is to *boaſt* of their own Divinity, as if they were the only proper *judges* of what is the part of a *Divine*, and to *Counterpoint* their own *Skill* and *Judgment* to that of our famous *Profeſſors*. But we will not ask who *go out of their line now*? This is a full Hiſtory of the *crimes* charged on the *Miniſters*, wherein they have *gone out of their line*: That is to ſay, When they ſaw their *People* dying about them, and their deareſt *Friends* they had, *Gaſping for their Breath*, they did not caſt off all *bowels* of *compaſſion*, and be *content* that no further tryal ſhould be made of a *Method*, that they apprehended would deliver them from their *danger*.

§ 7. We will not on this occasion enquire, how far our **Practitioners** & late **Libellers** have *gone out of their line.* But this we remark, that if any *Person*, of any Profession, had been appris'd of a *safe Method* to preserve his *Neighbour's* Life, in a Time of common danger, and had not *communicated* it to him, he had approved himself to be of a very un-natural, and un-christian *Temper.* And our Ministers especially, who are *Shining Patterns* of *Charity*, would have appear'd with a *distinguisht Blackness*, had they neglected this good Office to the *Flocks* intrusted with them. How very unjust and wicked then are the *Obloquies* and *Outrages* which have been for this Cause heaped upon them. The famous Mr. *Thomas Thacher* was not reviled, for *going out of his line*, when he Publisht a Sheet of Directions, relating to the *Small Pox*, Forty three Years since. And several eminent Ministers in the *Country*, have practised *Physick*, and several do so at this Day, and we could never hear them revil'd for *going out of their line:* And possibly, there are among the Ministers of Boston, such as the best **Physicians** in the Land, need not be ashamed to *advice* withal.

§ 8. After all, We have often heard that Maxim, *That a Power to do Good not only gives a right, to the doing of it, but makes the doing it a Duty.* And we humbly conceive, if it were more regarded, the *World* would many ways *reap* the *Benefit* of it. And to us it is very evident, that he that sees his *Neighbour* exposed to any great danger, and can relieve him; not only has a *Right* but should look on it as his *Duty*, to do so.

§ 9

§ 9. Now this being all the *Crime*, that is with any *Shadow* of *Reaſon* charged upon our **Miniſters**, we cannot but look upon it, as the greateſt *inhumanity* and blackeſt *ingratitude* to treat them in ſuch a manner as they have been. We ought rather to value & eſteem them; love and thank them, for their Goodneſs; and bleſs GOD for making them the *Inſtruments* of ſo much Good to us, and to our Families. We are ſure the great *Succeſs* of the *Practice*, which they hoped ſo well of, has cauſed many among us to wiſh, that inſtead of ſuch baſe Methods, as have been taken to oppoſe it, a *regular management* of it had been agreed upon; and ſome are of Opinion, that our **Miniſters** may ſay to their waſted People, what the **Apoſtle** did upon the *Shipwreck*, *Sirs*, *You ſhould have hearkned unto me, and not have gained this Harm and Loſs.*

§ 10. But we will not enter into the Controverſy, what we obſerve is, that according to this *way* of treating the **Miniſters**, which is now in *Faſhion*, it will come to this; If in a Time of common Diſtreſs, they with great Modeſty offer their *Opinion* for the *Common good*, they ſhall be cenſured, for *going out of their line*. If on a Day of *Publick Thanksgiving*, they mention Publick Mercies, as thoſe of a *good Government*, &c. or if they rebuke the growing *Sins* of the Times, and put any *notorious Tranſgreſſors* in mind of the awful Threatnings, pronounced *in the Holy Writings* againſt them; it ſhall be deem'd *going out of their line*; yea, their **Warning** of the *wicked* ſhall be ridiculouſly called, a **Curſing** *of them.*

If

If this *impious* & Satanic Cuſtom prevail, we ſhall involve our ſelves into a thouſand pernicious *Evils*. Our *Children* will imbibe the *Poiſon*, and periſh like the *Children of Bethel*; and our Elder People will *pine away in their Iniquities*. Our *Reprovers* and *Prophets* being Silenced, *Iniquity* and every *Abomination* will break in among us, and bear down like an irreſiſtable Torrent, all *Virtue*, and *Religion* before it. And what is moſtly to be deprecated, all manner of *Spiritual Plagues* will follow this our degeneracy; and the *Town* grow ripe for a *Wrath unto the Uttermoſt*. We read, *They mocked the Meſſengers of* GOD, *and miſuſed his Prophets, until the Wrath of the Lord aroſe againſt his People, and there was no Remedy*. In what a deplorable Condition ſhould we be, if *Heaven* ſhould pronounce this direful *fate* upon us; or, if the intolerable *invectives* read among us, againſt our Holy **Miniſters**, ſhould provoke GOD to deprive us of theſe *Invaluable Bleſſings*, and puniſh us with a *Clergy*, that ſhould be *Salt without Savour*, and *Clouds without Rain*, as we have ſeen in other Places.

§ 11. In the mean time, we commiſerate the deplorable *State* of thoſe, who ſignalize themſelves by their *Malice* & Miſchief againſt theſe faithful *Servants* of GOD. We have ſeen a Conſpicuous *blaſt* from Heaven attending ſuch, and GOD has ſo remarkably revenged the Iniquity, that none but ſuch as are given over to a *penal hardneſs of heart*, can hide their Fear and Trembling. And when we conſider, the *meekneſs* of our **Miniſters** under theſe *Abuſes*, imitating their *Glo-*

rious

rious Maſter, who remained *as dumb under the Shearers*. We cannot but the more deprecate the fearful condition of theſe *Revilers*, and earneſtly call upon our dear *Freinds* and *Neighbours*, to depart from the *Tents* of theſe *Wicked Men*, leaſt they periſh with them. And we encourage our ſelves, that all our *virtuous Neighbours* will unite, to diſcourage theſe **Wicked Libels**. But whether this will be taken well by them, or no, ſure we are, it will be acceptable to our **Bleſſed Saviour**, who is greatly offended at them who wrong His faithful *Servants*, and calls from *Heaven*, *Why perſecute ye me?*

§ 12. However, Our Beloved **Paſtors**, We beſeech you not to be in the leaſt diſcouraged in your faithful Services; We, who hope, to be part of your *Crown* at the *Coming* of our **Lord Jeſus Chriſt**, earneſtly intreat you to go on very chearfully & couragiouſly in the *Service* of your great *Maſter*. You have many Cordial & Sincere *Freinds* among us, who love and eſteem you the more, and Pray & Plead the more with *Heaven* for you, becauſe of theſe *Cruel Enemies*. And we doubt not, but that Our **Bleſſed Saviour** (whoſe you are, and whom you ſerve) will ſtill honour you to do great *Service* for Him, and reſcue your *Opportunities* to do good, from the malicious and wicked *Attempts* of your *Adverſaries*; and at length, appear to your *Joy* and their unſpeakable *Shame & Confuſion*.

To cloſe all, By what we have ſaid, We ſuppoſe that we ſhall be accounted, (by ſome)

Buſy

Buſy Inoculators, and would have none to write on that Subject, but ſuch as approve the Practice; but we would not be ſo miſrepreſented, but would have every one (if he ſees cauſe) that has Leiſure and Capacity to inſtruct his Neighbours, to improve his Talent, provided he does not ſtuff his Compoſures with ſcandalous Reflections, ſuch as we have, and every *Chriſtian* and *Gentleman* will declare againſt. We are of opinion, that Perſons may differ in their *Sentiments* about this Practice, without declaring themſelves *Open* Enemies to one another, and neglecting *Chriſtian* and *Civil* Converſation; and may notwithſtanding, *Unite* in all thoſe things which tend to promote the **Common Good**. We may with more reaſon be angry, that two Perſons do not *Look* alike, than that they do not in all things *Think* juſt alike. We are of opinion, that in ſuch Caſes as theſe, *Every Perſon ought to Act according to his own Light*; and we ſhould not *Unchriſtianly* Cenſure and Condemn one another for the *Uſe* or *Neglect* of it, but preſerve a due *Eſteem* and Veneration for each other, and perform all *Chriſtian* and *Neighbourly* offices notwithſtanding; which, that we of this *Place* may do, we ſhall not be wanting in our *hearty* Endeavours, and *ſincere* Addreſſes to the Throne of Grace —. To which every *Friend* of the **Publick** will add his AMEN.

Boſton, January 30th, 1721-2.